SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE
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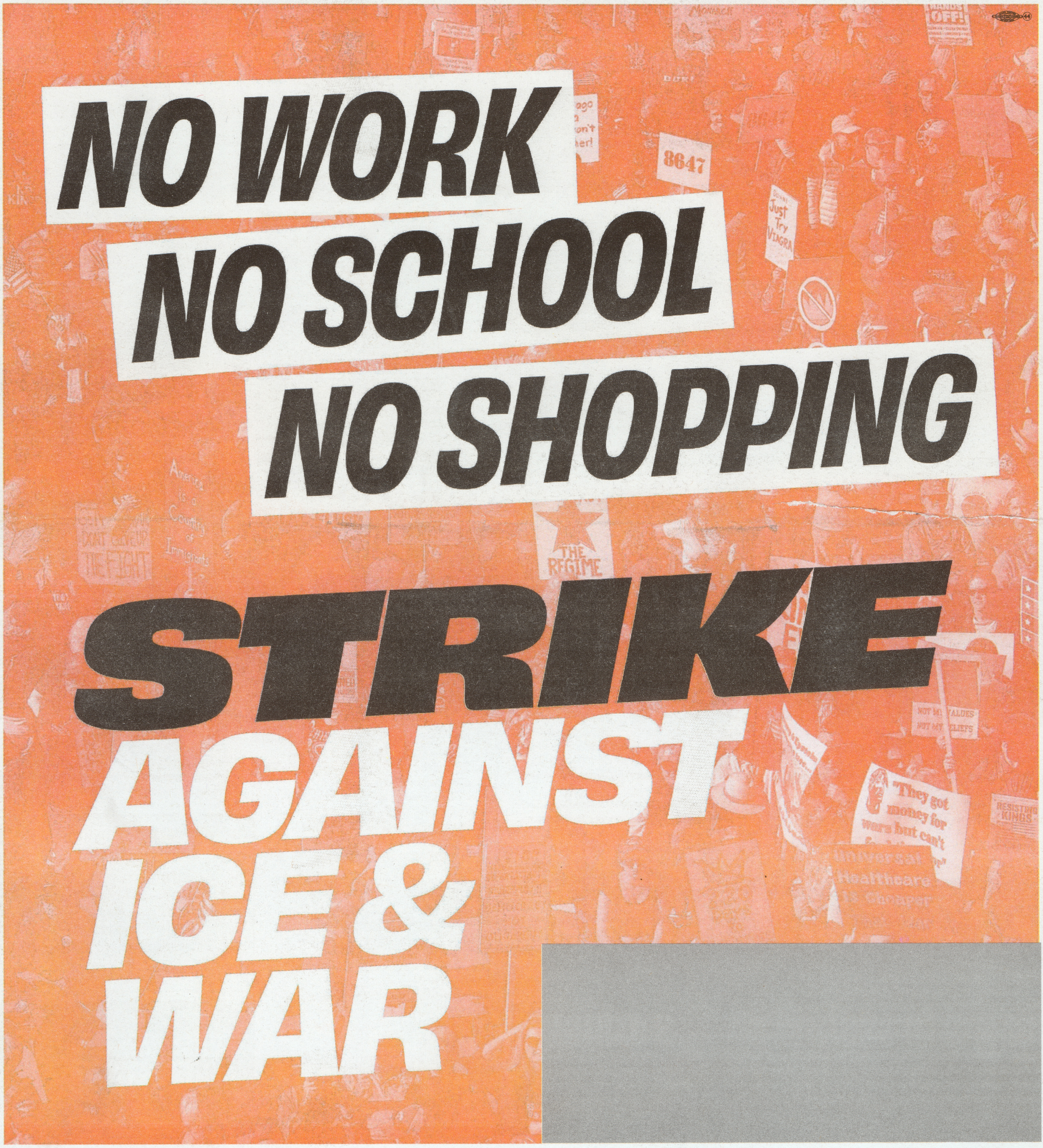
HANDS OFF!
MONARCH
8647
Just Try VIAGRA
America is a Country of Immigrants
THE REGIME
NOT MY VALUES NOT MY BELIEFS
RESISTING KINGS
"They got money for wars but can't
Universal Healthcare is Cheaper

NO WORK
NO SCHOOL
NO SHOPPING

STRIKE AGAINST ICE & WAR

[redacted]

WHY I JOINED SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

ERIN L, CHICAGO

Shortly after passing my nursing board exam, I began looking for ways to get involved in my community outside of my workplace, and came across Socialist Alternative. Concurrently learning about their socialist politics and going through my nursing orientation was a glaring reminder that healthcare under capitalism is not something to be passive about—with public insurance, reproductive rights, and trans healthcare all omitted by design. Alternatively, the future socialism posits is one where basic needs are met, and where caregivers, like me, are not made to be spokespeople for profit schemes on human needs. It's a future where we can focus solely on caring for our community, not making profits for healthcare CEOs.

"Social reproduction work" is a term that accounts for jobs like mine; it means labor that is necessary to "make the people" (think caretakers, housekeepers, educators). Even before I had this vocabulary, I knew work that directly supported my community was meaningful to me, despite knowing of the sexism, low pay, and poor working conditions that often comes with fields such as nursing. But for me, working towards a socialist future means also taking pride in my labor. The work that gets done at my hospital is because of unity and skill shared by nurses, techs, EVS, providers, secretaries, and so on, and we warrant a workplace that is fairly represented and unexploited. It's time for care work to be externally empowered and well funded, and not counted on as a "labor of love."

Socialist Alternative motivates me to be more active in the struggle for a future where care work dollars never end up in the hands of healthcare CEOs who would not touch the sick with a ten foot pole. Through our work, I have built confidence to discuss exactly how our economic system is incompatible with humanity, and as my passion for nursing grows, tandem is my desire for my coworkers, patients, and the public to be liberated from class oppression. ✪

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Fight Trump & The Far Right

- The Democrats can't and won't stop Trump's agenda. Fight Trump and his billionaire government's far-right, authoritarian agenda with mass protests, walkouts, occupations, strikes, and a new working-class party.
- No scapegoating—it's the capitalist system that creates crises and suffering, not immigrants, transgender people, or any marginalized group. Build working-class solidarity and struggle to fight back against the capitalist class's divide and rule.

Work To Live, Not Live To Work

- Raise the federal minimum wage to $25/hr, adjusted annually for cost of living increases, as a step toward a living wage for all.
- 32 hour work week with no loss in pay or benefits (minimum $52,000/year). Share out the work with the unemployed and create new union jobs.
- A minimum guaranteed income of $4,000/month for the unemployed, disabled, and elderly, as well as for stay-at-home parents of children up to Pre-K or those unable to work.
- A guaranteed decent pension for all. No cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid—tax the rich to expand these crucial safety net programs.
- Combat the cost-of-living crisis—establish price controls on everyday goods.

Tax The Rich To Invest In Our Basic Needs

- Free, universal healthcare, paid sick leave, and cancellation of all medical debt.
- Take the pharmaceutical companies and for-profit hospitals into democratic public ownership to develop state-of-the-art treatments and provide high-quality care at no cost to patients.
- Fully fund and drastically expand addiction and mental health services.
- A massive expansion of high-quality, permanently affordable, publicly-owned housing where renters are legally protected from discrimination. Pass strong universal rent control and stop the criminalization of homelessness.
- Fully fund public education and end school privatization. Stop all right-wing attacks on education; for a national curriculum written in collaboration with teachers' unions, parents and students, based on the scientific method and an uncensored version of history.
- Cancel all student debt. Make all public college tuition-free.
- Eliminate gun violence—massive investment in jobs programs, after-school programs, and recreation centers as a starting point, combined with basic gun control policies.

Fight All Oppression

- Fight racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and all forms of oppression with working-class solidarity and struggle. Build a mass, multiracial, multi-gender movement against systemic oppression and capitalism.
- Equal rights for all, including equal pay for equal work. End all harassment, discrimination, and violence against women, LGBTQ people, Black people, immigrants, disabled people, and all marginalized groups.
- End the institutional racism of the criminal justice system, the racist "war on drugs," and mass incarceration. Invest in rehabilitation, job training, and living-wage jobs, not prisons. End low-paid prison labor, which is modern-day slavery. Abolish the death penalty.
- Arrest and convict killer cops. Immediately fire all police officers with a history of brutality and racist behavior. Demilitarize the police. Put all police departments under the control of democratically-elected civilian boards with the power to hire, fire, subpoena, and set budget priorities.
- No more voter registration—automatic voting rights for all.
- Defend the right to choose whether and when to have children. Free contraception as part of a broad program for reproductive health including comprehensive, LGBTQ-inclusive sex education.
- Free, safe, legal, and accessible abortion. Stop all right-wing attempts to criminalize abortion.
- Paid parental leave for 18 months and free, high-quality childcare and preschool for all.
- Full legal rights for all queer people, including the right to self-identify and express one's gender freely. Free, gender-affirming universal healthcare.

Defend Immigrants' Rights

- Abolish ICE. No immigrant detentions or deportations. Immediate, unconditional legalization and equal rights for all undocumented immigrants, regardless of their job status.
- No to capitalist divide-and-rule. Unions must lead the way in uniting immigrants and US-born workers, organizing all workers and forming deportation defense committees in every workplace.
- Build a movement against the destructive policies of US imperialism around the world that drive working-class people to flee their home countries.

End All Imperialist War

- Fight the rich, not their wars—build a massive, international anti-war movement.
- End the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. The right to self-determination of all nationalities, with guaranteed rights for ethnic, religious, and national minorities. End the occupation and siege of all Palestinian territories.
- Abolish NATO and all imperialist alliances. Stop the military build-up between the two blocs led by US and Chinese imperialism, and oppose the ramping up of nationalism around the world.
- Drastically cut the bloated US military budget and redirect that money toward free universal healthcare, public education, and high-quality affordable housing for all.
- Capitalism breeds imperialism, plunging the world into devastating wars. Only international socialism can bring about lasting peace.

Rebuild Fighting Unions

- We need unions that fight the bosses and their parties with tactics like strikes, mass demonstrations, and open defiance of anti-union laws. Fighting unions should be democratically controlled by their memberships.
- Not another dime of union money to either party of big business—Democrat or Republican. Spend the millions now spent on corporate political campaigns to launch massive drives to organize non-union workers across the US, and run independent, pro-working class candidates.
- Union leaders must accept the average wage of the workers they represent.
- Reject both capitalist "free trade" policies and "America first" protectionism. US workers have more in common with workers around the globe than we do with the bosses at home.
- End anti-union "right to work" and "open-shop" legislation. Implement simple majority card check for all unionization drives.
- Unions need to fight all manifestations of racism, xenophobia, sexism, queerphobia, and all forms of discrimination and oppression. The unions should organize mass non-compliance, strikes, and walkouts against right-wing attacks.

End Climate Catastrophe

- Ban new oil and gas drilling and take the top 100 polluting companies into democratic public ownership. Implement a democratically planned, just transition to 100% renewable energy as part of an international plan.
- A massive, unionized green jobs program. Give all workers in polluting industries the option of a union job rapidly building and operating green infrastructure with no loss in pay, benefits, or seniority.
- Fully-funded emergency systems to protect and evacuate people from the more frequent and severe storms, floods, and fires caused by climate change. High-quality housing and assistance for those displaced or otherwise affected.

Build A New Mass Workers' Party

- No votes or donations to any Democrats or Republicans—the labor movement and social movements must build a new, anti-war, working-class party.
- Unite this new workers' party around a common program, developed through democratic debate and discussion in every workplace, school, and community. It should take no corporate donations, no money from billionaires, and have a socialist program.
- All elected officials to make no more than the average wage of their constituents.

Revolutionary Socialism & Internationalism

- Capitalism produces poverty, oppression, environmental destruction, pandemics, and war. We need an international working-class revolution against this failed system.
- Take the top 500 corporations and banks that dominate the US economy into democratic public ownership. Run them under the democratic management of elected representatives of workers and the broader public.
- A democratic and socialist plan for the economy based on the common interests of working people and youth everywhere—for a socialist United States and a socialist world.

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How To Stop An Authoritarian

Hannah Swoboda, Seattle

In many ways, the Trump regime is now at its weakest point yet. In January, Trump faced a showdown with the working class of Minnesota. The resulting general strike in Minneapolis forced him to pull most ICE agents out of the state, fire his head of Homeland Security, and reduce the profile of his war on immigrants. In late March, Trump's approval ratings dropped to the lowest point in his second term as discontent mounts over his connections to Jeffrey Epstein, his increasingly unpopular war in Iran, and the resulting 30% surge in gas prices.

Trump campaigned on ending "forever wars." Instead, he's launched a war on Iran which has quickly become a quagmire, wreaking total havoc on the global economy. He's thrown his disastrous handling of the economy back in our faces, declaring the affordability crisis "a hoax." And while his administration has dramatically increased the cost of healthcare for millions, the Pentagon is asking Congress for another $200 billion—roughly equivalent to the discretionary budgets for the departments of education, health, and housing combined!

All of this spells a major crisis for the Trump administration, but it would be a mistake to think he still couldn't find a way out of it. While there's mass anger around Trump's war on Iran, the cost of living, and the Epstein files, anger alone won't stop Trump. That outrage needs to be channeled into exactly the sort of class struggle that just pushed Trump back in Minneapolis, hitting him where it counts: in the pockets of the billionaire class that he belongs to and represents. It's crucial that we take advantage of this moment of weakness for Trump using the momentum of the class struggle flowing out of January's general strike in the Twin Cities. There's an urgent need to escalate with further strike action on a nationwide scale.

Lessons From Minneapolis

Workers run the economy. Our labor generates every last dollar of profit that big business CEOs depend on to grow their already enormous personal fortunes and keep their rigged capitalist system going. When we withhold our labor through coordinated workplace action, it has the power to grind the economy to a halt. That's a huge problem for Trump or any other capitalist politician tasked with ensuring that profits keep flowing to the billionaires.

ICE's invasion of Minneapolis earlier this year fueled a qualitative leap forward in the anti-Trump struggle, putting the most powerful tool back into the hands of the working class: the political general strike. Trump's shock-and-awe deportation strategy, intended to tamp down working-class opposition to his authoritarian rule by normalizing ICE terror in the streets, decisively backfired.

The sheer brutality of ICE's invasion, including the execution of two peaceful protesters, spurred on widespread grassroots organizing to resist ICE, culminating in the nation's first general strike in decades, on January 23. In response to the strike, 60 CEOs signed a letter calling on Trump to pump the brakes. Although ICE has not completely left the state, Trump ordered a tactical retreat: he wrapped up "Operation Metro Surge", sacked Greg Bovino and former Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, and has decreased the intensity and volume of ICE operations, for now.

The working class landed its first blow against Trump 2.0, concluding the Battle of Minneapolis with a victory. But it will take continued struggle and organizing on a much greater scale to end Trump's war on working people, both at home and abroad.

Seize The Moment: Get Strike-Ready For May 1

A coalition of labor leaders and community organizations has called to repeat Minneapolis's day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping" on a national scale on May 1, International Workers' Day. This is exactly the sort of escalation that we need.

Key unions like the Association of Flight Attendants and the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), along with smaller unions in cities across the country, have been building for actions on May Day. Largely, though, these organizing efforts have been taking place behind the scenes by union leaders and staffers without involving the broader membership. This is detrimental to the goal of building the largest and most effective day of action. There's an urgent need to widely publicize the idea of strikes, walkouts, and sickouts on May 1, including dispelling myths and fears around "illegal" strikes.

Even basic organizing methods need to be spread and repopularized—especially among the 90% of workers not in a union, but including in unionized workplaces—like how to talk to your coworkers about taking action and how to defend against retaliation. The behind-the-scenes strategy was a weakness of the January 23 strike in Minneapolis as well, which could have been even larger and more powerful if union leaders had publicly called for strike action boldly and consistently, and used union resources to train up a new, wide layer of organizers across the city.

CTU has been perhaps the most vocal in publicizing their efforts to build for May 1. The union is demanding that Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson grant students an excused absence for a "civic event" on May 1, so that educators can participate in a day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping." Johnson should absolutely enact it. After all, in October, he literally called for a general strike—though this was largely bluster, and a serious call to action will require serious pressure from below.

There's no shortcut to shutting down Chicago Public Schools or any other workplace—it will take hundreds of conversations and planning meetings in order to successfully shut down the over 600 Chicago public schools, whether or not Mayor Johnson grants absences. And it will take workers everywhere getting prepared now to build the biggest nationwide strike on May Day.

With a bolder lead by major national unions and a powerful approach to bottom-up organizing, the potential would exist for May 1 to be a national general strike, the first in the history of the US. But a handful of citywide strikes or even partial work stoppages alongside mass demonstrations across the country would still be a very important step forward for the anti-Trump struggle.

...And Beyond

Even a one-day all-out general strike on its own likely wouldn't spell a total defeat for Trump. To drive Trump out of office, workers would need to be prepared to bring the economy to a standstill indefinitely, until our demands are won. Getting strike-ready for May 1 will be crucial preparation to mobilize even more decisive strike action for the bigger battles ahead.

As the midterm elections draw closer, Democrats' refrain that voting is our most powerful tool to take down Trump is growing louder and ringing more and more hollow. The Democratic Party has been worse than ineffective at mounting any sort of opposition to Trump. Twice now, they've used federal workers as collateral in negotiations, forcing them to work without pay during government shutdowns so that Democratic politicians can make a big show of fighting for healthcare and against ICE, while in reality achieving nothing. Democratic politicians have focused on how Trump launched his wars on Venezuela and Iran—without "due process" and permission from Congress—rather than genuinely opposing his imperialist war aims.

> ***While there's mass anger around Trump's war on Iran, the cost of living, and the Epstein files, anger alone won't stop Trump.***

While Democrats have tried to direct the anti-Trump struggle into the voting booth, Trump is attacking voting rights from every angle and frothing at the mouth to declare November's midterms illegitimate. Any attempt by Trump to steal the election needs to be met with mass strike action. Such a decisive rebuke for Trump at the hands of working-class struggle could undermine the ruling class's confidence in Trump to the point of ditching him. On the other hand, if Trump succeeded in stealing the election it could pose a very serious setback for the working class and cement Trump's authoritarian power grab.

If there's one lesson to draw from everything that's happened so far under Trump's second term, it's this: the Democrats and the courts can't and won't defeat Trump. Class struggle, like we saw in Minneapolis, is the only way to stop an authoritarian. ✪

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST!

Temple U Walks Out

ZUHAIR AL-ANHAR, PHILADELPHIA

On March 11, over 500 Temple University students in Philadelphia walked out against ICE terror and to defend the right to protest. Students protested in solidarity with Jerome Richardson, a Temple student who was arrested on federal charges of conspiracy for protesting against ICE in St. Paul, Minnesota.

When Temple student Darryl heard about this egregious repression, they didn't take it lying down. Inspired by the January 23 Minneapolis general strike and seeing student walkouts against ICE across the country, they fought back, alongside other students and Philadelphia Socialist Alternative. We spoke to Darryl and Rachel, a Temple alum and SAlt member, about exactly how they made it happen.

FUND SNAP NOT ICE
ICE OFF OUR STREETS!
FUND SCHOOLS NOT ICE
NOT ICE
FREE PALESTINE
NOT FOR WAR & DEPORTATIONS
FUND SCHOOLS ABOLISH
ICE OUT OF SOUTH PENN NOW
ICE KKK

Photo by Joe Piette @jpiette660

Socialist Alternative: What made you decide to organize this walkout and how did you get it off the ground?

Darryl: I'd seen the reports of what happened to Jerome and it really upset me. I thought, I could be targeted next if I protest against what Trump and ICE are doing. We had to do something. The first step was meeting with people. You can't do something like this by yourself, it's impossible. So I sent you guys [Socialist Alternative] a DM on Instagram and said we should build a walkout, and Rachel was like, you can do that. And we just took it from there.

SAlt: How did you spread the word and get more people involved?

D: The first main tactic was first creating a flyer for a planning meeting, something people can see. It's not just a flyer, it's a tool—that's how most of the word spread, seeing someone who can talk to you face to face about these issues. We also went to other student orgs and invited them to our first planning meeting, where we discussed the reasons we were walking out and then talked more concretely about how to make it happen. At our first meeting, we decided on some of the demands we should fight for:

- No ICE on Temple's campus and no collaboration or data sharing with ICE
- Drop the charges against Jerome
- Reverse all punitive measures taken against SJP, JVP, and all student activists

Rachel: Students volunteered to use their free printing to print thousands of flyers that we handed out every day leading up to the walkout and plastered around campus. We made announcements in classes encouraging peers to walk out and reached out to other student orgs. We also reached out to unions on campus and encouraged supportive teachers to email their union to support the walkout, since we know students and workers are stronger united.

SAlt: A little over a year ago, there were massively inspiring encampments at campuses across the country to protest the genocide in Gaza. These encampments faced brutal repression, from police and campus administrations. Was there any fear of this type of repression?

R: Definitely. Every official student org we reached out to was supportive of the walkout, but unwilling to sign on because they were afraid they would lose club status. SJP and JVP both faced repercussions for breaking the new student code of conduct that effectively bans protesting on campus as "disrupting educational processes."

D: One question we dealt with was from international students who were afraid to protest because they were worried they'd be targeted. We understand that fear, but we argued that fear will only play into the hands of the ruling class, because if people are afraid to protest then protest won't happen. They want us to be afraid and divided, so that our fightback is weaker.

SAlt: How did the walkout go? What were your main takeaways?

D: It was insanely successful. The beginning rally had 500 students, and then we drew in more as we marched on Broad Street. Speakers talked about the inhumane tactics of ICE, the war in Iran, and how all these issues are interconnected, they're all intertwined. It's all part of a systemic issue.

R: The police tried to stop us from using megaphones. So we started our chants without the megaphone and pulled it out when our crowd was big enough, chanting "we will not be silenced!"

D: Then at the end we had an open mic which was really impactful because people got to share their point of view. It made people feel like they were part of something.

SAlt: So what are the next steps?

D: Our immediate next step was building for a Students for a General Strike teach-in, to talk, and get people organized. Coming out of the teach-in, we're building for the day of action of "No Work, No School, No Shopping" on May Day. The walkout was great for getting students mobilized, but a general strike across the nation will unite us as the working class, and show that we have the power to fight the machinery, we have power to fight against the ruling class. ✪

Cincinnati Builds Anti-ICE, Strike-Ready Fightback

JORDAN ENGELKE, CINCINNATI

Donald Trump's war and deportation machine has kicked into overdrive, tearing apart communities at home while expanding violence abroad. But across the country, resistance is shifting from isolated protests toward coordinated action. The central question is no longer whether to fight back, but how.

That question was at the heart of the Cincinnati Anti-ICE Action Conference (AIAC), held on March 14 at the University of Cincinnati. More than 150 participants—community members, activists, union members, healthcare workers, teachers, and students—came together to turn our collective anger into durable opposition to Trump's agenda.

The Cincinnati branch of Socialist Alternative initiated the AIAC with endorsements from more than a dozen local organizations and left groups. The conference placed democratic discussion front and center with the aim of developing a unified strategy and concrete next steps in the fight ahead. Alongside several of the endorsing groups, we introduced a joint resolution—"Building a Strike-Ready Movement in Cincinnati"—for attendees to discuss, debate, and vote on.

Central to the resolution is May 1, when the May Day Strong Coalition has called for a national day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping." The case for strike action is grounded in what we already know works—that work stoppages and student walkouts combined with mass protests can disrupt business as usual. Even partial, concurrent participation nationally on May 1 would create economic disruption and a threat of further escalation, which can force Trump to back down.

To start building a strike-ready movement in Cincinnati, AIAC attendees voted to approve a plan to mobilize as many people as possible for the next No Kings protest on March 28 as a stepping stone for May Day. At No Kings, we didn't just show up, but talked to as many people as possible, collecting nearly 200 strike pledges for May Day action.

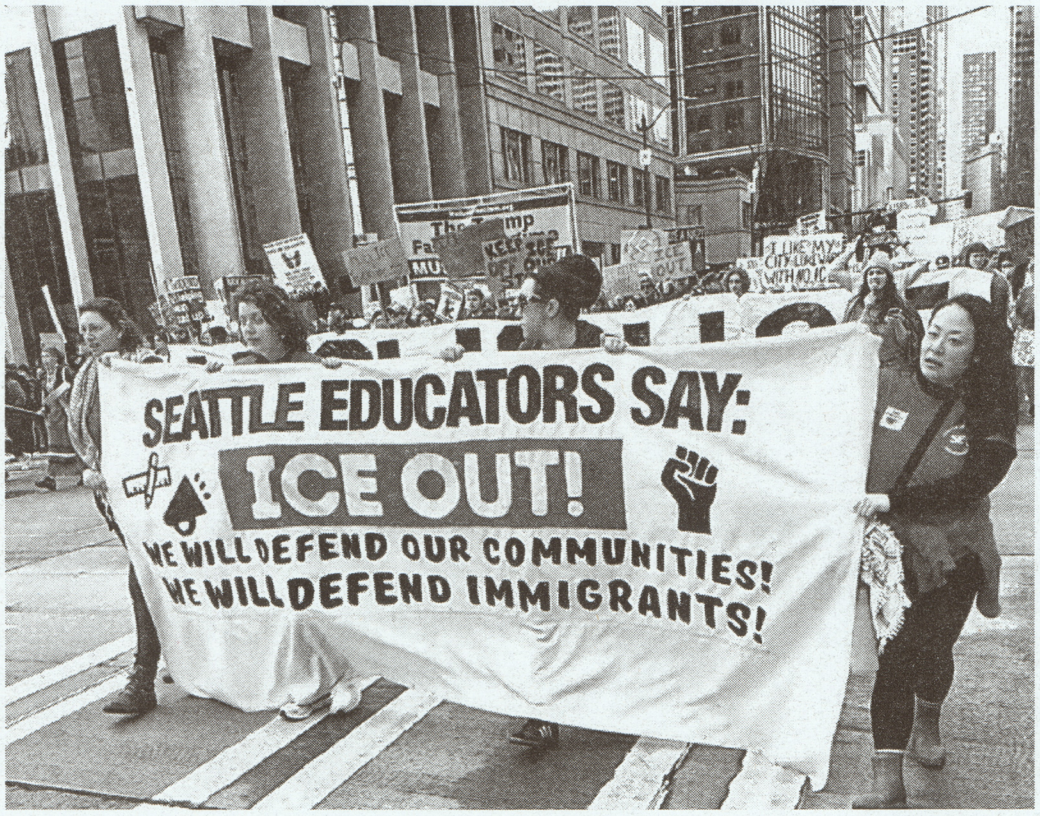
The kind of unity displayed at the action conference is how movements build the power to win our demands. In the resolution, these demands include taxing the rich to fund public schools and expand social services, securing full citizenship rights for all immigrants, abolishing ICE, and ending the war in Iran.

As May Day approaches, we face a compressed timeline to prepare participants for the risks and responsibilities of collective action, including strikes, sickouts, and walkouts. Strike readiness does not emerge overnight; it develops through sustained, deliberate organizing grounded in clear strategy and concrete objectives. ✪

How Seattle Educators Are Organizing Against ICE

MATT MALEY, SEATTLE

Matt is a shop steward in the Seattle Education Association.


SEATTLE EDUCATORS SAY:
ICE OUT!
WE WILL DEFEND OUR COMMUNITIES!
WE WILL DEFEND IMMIGRANTS!

On Tuesday, January 20, there were reports of ICE activity near the middle school I teach at in South Seattle, which has a significant number of immigrant students, causing the school to go into shelter-in-place.

After this scare, members of the educator's union, Seattle Education Association (SEA), at my school felt compelled to take action in solidarity with the day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping" on January 23 in Minneapolis. While interested in taking strike action, many staff members felt that calling out of work would leave our immigrant students without the support and consistency they depend on in school.

Instead, we organized a "walk-in" action on January 23 where we welcomed students before school, holding signs like "Immigrants are welcome here" and "SEA stands in solidarity with immigrant students." Some students even joined us, and later that day, a small group of students participated in a walk-out during lunch. Over the course of the next few weeks, hundreds of students across Seattle and the neighboring cities participated in walk-outs and other actions.

Sidewalk Solidarity & Beyond

January 23 spurred ongoing efforts by SEA members to organize "Know Your Rights" trainings, to pass resolutions in solidarity with immigrant students, and to develop rapid response groups in schools. In my building, a group of parents, teachers, and community members launched a rapid response group called Sidewalk Solidarity.

This has mostly been organized independently of the official union structures, with families and teachers meeting in-person at my building and in the community. Together, we divide up into shifts to support students and respond to rumors of ICE. While important, individual union and community members taking the initiative to defend against ICE on some school properties is not a replacement for the union itself taking collective action district-wide.

In the days following January 23, students at the University of Minnesota called for a national day of action against ICE on January 30. Members of the SEA Immigration Committee proposed a solidarity protest to union leadership, but they initially refused. Instead, the left caucus of the union—the Seattle Caucus of Rank & File Educators (SCORE)—took up the call for a protest on Saturday, January 31, eventually endorsed by half a dozen union locals and immigrant defense organizations.

After the call developed some momentum, SEA signed on to the rally. Two additional rallies were called in solidarity that day by tech workers and healthcare workers, both of which marched to meet the educator-led protest—5,000 people altogether were out in the streets that day. The energy was palpable, with organized workers across several sectors looking for a way forward. Unfortunately, many high profile activists and union leaders fell short of calling for the kinds of offensive struggle that is needed.

Throughout the country, we've seen that it takes bottom-up organizing to drag the unions into action against Trump and ICE. This can be frustrating, but it is necessary and possible. This is the kind of organizing it will take to mobilize schools on May Day and bigger battles ahead.

Unions Need To Step Up

With a nationwide day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping" being called on May Day by a section of the labor leadership, all unions must take urgent steps to get strike-ready. It's important that the president of the American Federation of Teachers Randi Weingarten is a part of this call, but without serious membership-wide preparation for strike action, including defying no-strike clauses when needed, a nationwide strike on May Day will not be possible.

To build for the strongest ICE resistance, we need to escalate community actions to develop national coordination, and create spaces with democratic structures that bring together union members across all sectors. Socialists and working people have a key role to play in pointing toward the kind of world we need, free of racism, sexism, xenophobia, and imperialist war. ✪

BEYOND "SECURITY CULTURE": HOW TO FIGHT REPRESSION

BRIAN HARRISON, HOUSTON

In his second term, President Trump has forged and wielded ICE as his own army, with brutal ICE raids in LA, Chicago, and Minneapolis. However, ICE's extreme violence and Trump's threats to crack down on what he calls "domestic terrorism" compel working-class movements to grapple with the best ways to fight government repression. Some in the movement advocate for a highly secretive "security culture" around small groups of activists. But the intensity and sophistication of the state's attacks will require a defense that is more politicized and collective.

New Tech & Surveillance

ICE and Border Patrol are using much of their money from Trump's Big "Billionaire" Bill to weaponize new technology against working people and the movement against deportations.

The all-seeing digital camera array called the Gorgon Stare was first deployed on drones in the imperialist battlefields of Afghanistan and Ukraine. Now, ICE likely deploys it in US cities. Perhaps most significantly, ICE contracted with Peter Thiel-owned Palantir to develop an AI tool called ImmigrationOS to comb through all the terabytes of raw information collected and identify "targets" for deportation.

Much of this surveillance technology has been in use for a decade or so. However, artificial intelligence radically changes the battlefield because it enables ICE to review, organize, and weaponize much more data than was ever possible before AI. How can working-class movements fight these new threats?

Mass Movements Make Us Safe

With all of these threats to our movements, it's clear that we need to defend ourselves. But much of the secretive "security culture" that has developed among some left activists in the movement will simply not be enough to withstand the onslaught.

For instance, using Signal gives us no protection if ICE can hack your phone without a warrant. Wearing masks and all black gives us no anonymity if the state criminalizes conspicuous clothing and the skies swarm with Gorgon Stare-enabled drones. Carrying firearms and body armor to a protest needlessly exposes us to harsher prosecutions and likely cuts our movements off from the wider working class. While we support the right for the working class to defend itself and absolutely believe we should take basic safety precautions, these things alone are not enough.

Instead of a "one quick trick" approach to security, we need to base ourselves on the political strength and popularity of our movements. And in this case, the best defense is also a good offense. When most working people support abolishing ICE and thousands march in the streets against deportation terror, we have no need to work in the shadows. Security culture's real weakness is that it often points in the opposite direction of what is needed—building mass movements. Instead, it points towards small, unaccountable groups often isolated from the broader working class that end up less safe in the face of repression.

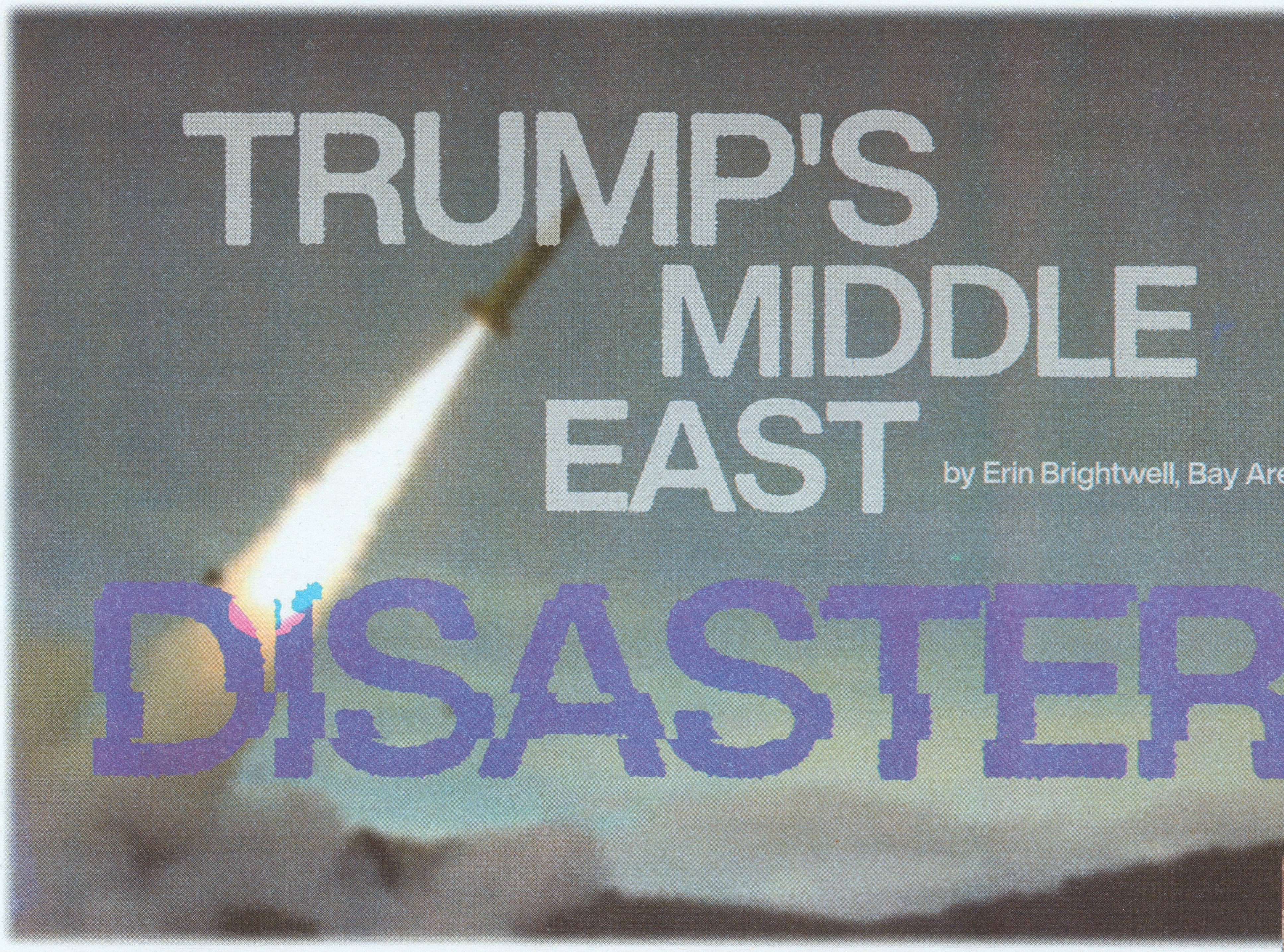
Labor unions must play a central role in movement defense; they have many of the basic protections non-union workplaces don't have, the capacity to organize workers across sectors, and crucial offensive weapons like the strike. Building the broadest possible movement of ordinary people with the power of the labor movement behind it is essential in protecting our movement as a whole—if the billionaire class tries to come for one of us, they will have to get through all of us.

Standing our ground politically, exposing the alleged conspiracies of "domestic terrorism" as fever dreams of the right-wing billionaire class, can strengthen our movement even as we fight the repression.

Stand Up, Fight Back!

What the Trump administration fears more than anything is a mass movement taking up the tactics of class struggle, like the Minneapolis general strike on January 23, and expanding it nationwide. They hope that by surveilling and repressing us with the technology of Silicon Valley billionaires, they can push working-class movements into the shadows, separating us from our communities, and locking us up with their courts.

Instead we must rely on the power and truth of our politics: no person is illegal, working people of all national origins share the same interests, and it is the billionaire class that truly threatens our society and world. ✪



TRUMP'S MIDDLE EAST DISASTER

by Erin Brightwell, Bay Area

BUILD MASS STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR

Ordinary people across the Middle East, but particularly in Iran and Lebanon, have been plunged into an increasingly catastrophic war by the US and its partner the Israeli state. Throughout the region, the war has brought destruction and death, with thousands killed and millions forced to flee their homes. The mass revolutionary movement in Iran, that earlier this year rattled the regime's grip on power, has been decisively halted by the war.

The US and Israel have struck thousands of government, military, and infrastructure targets and unleashed a series of assassinations of Iranian officials, most notably of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. In retaliation, Iran has bombed targets throughout the region—from military bases, to energy facilities, to civilian centers. At the time of writing, 14 US soldiers have been killed in the war.

Trump's war has also caused what is being described as the worst fuel crisis in history, as a major portion of the world's oil and gas has disappeared from markets due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The Trump regime didn't have any real plan for this eventuality, despite it being the key threat wielded against the West by the Iranian regime for decades. High off his operation to kidnap Nicolas Maduro and, in one fell swoop, to transform Venezuela from an ally of China to a semi-colony of US imperialism, Trump clearly underestimated the resilience of the Iranian regime which is prepared for a long war of attrition.

The capitalist class worldwide, and the rest of us along with it, is now in dire straits, as the fuel crisis will have spiralling effects across industries and across wide swaths of the world. With every day the war continues and the Strait of Hormuz remains closed, the risk of a 1930s-type global depression becomes greater. Trump knows he needs to get out of the war, but there is no clear path to an exit. A mass, international, working-class anti-war movement is urgently needed to bring an end to this disastrous war and to challenge the reactionary and volatile capitalist regimes responsible.

Why Did Trump Attack Iran?

Trump, never a stickler for the truth, has given a whole parade of different responses for why he is waging this war. The main one was that Iran was about to acquire a nuclear weapon that would have put the US in immediate danger. Ironically, the assassinated Khamenei had issued a fatwa (an Islamic ruling) against nuclear weapons, a ruling that died with him. Killed alongside Khamenei are several of the more moderate potential successors the US would have preferred. The new Iranian leadership is actually more hardline than the last one, and as a result of this war, military experts say that it's far more likely to go in the direction of pursuing nuclear weapons to defend Iran from future attacks.

Many speculate that Trump needed this war to distract the public from the Epstein files. Others believe Israel duped him and dragged him into it. In truth, this war is very much a mutual imperialist project of US and Israeli imperialisms to arrogantly continue the momentum of the past several years of war in the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon, of regime change in Syria, and of political decapitation in Venezuela (and potentially soon in Cuba). They aim to remove their main regional opponent to create a new Middle East with US-backed Israeli capitalism as the main economic powerhouse, funded by massive Gulf state investments, with free flow of goods and services.

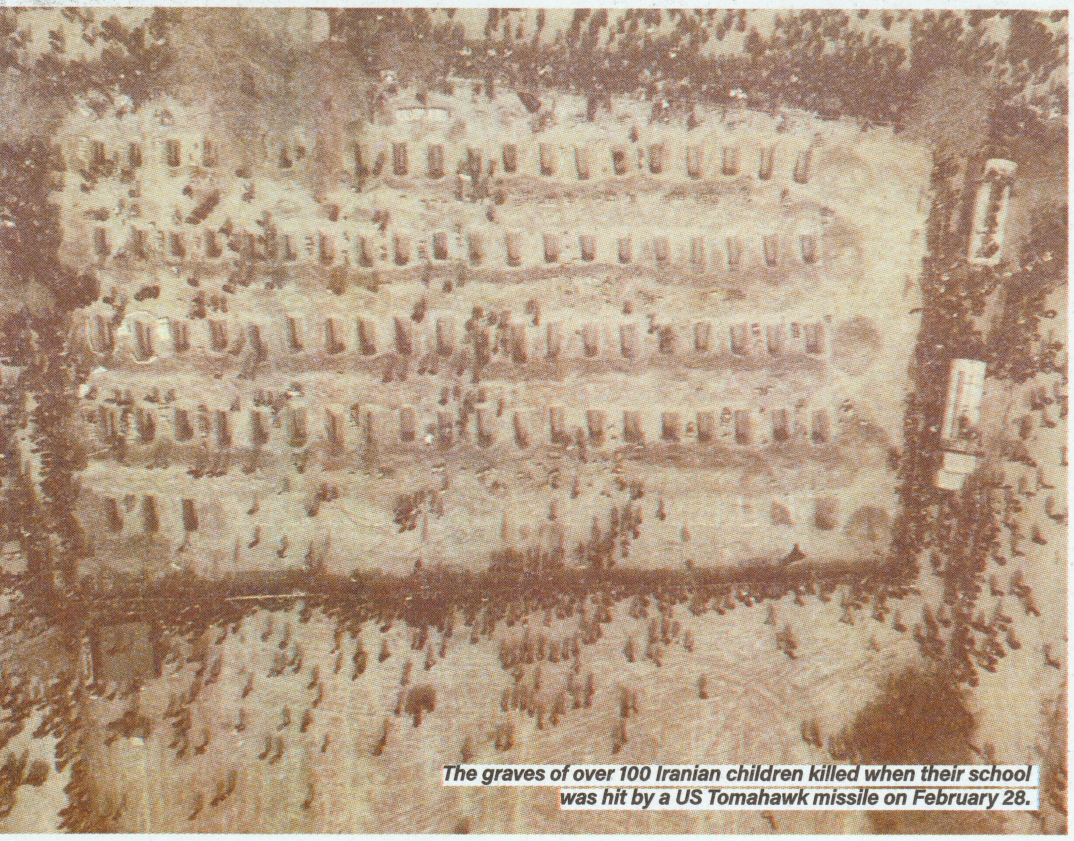
A big part of this means pushing back Chinese influence in the region. US hegemony defined world relations for decades in the post-WWII period, but the rise of China as an economic power has been a growing challenge to US dominance. As China became the manufacturing powerhouse of the world, it began pouring capital into infrastructure projects across the neocolonial world, as well as in parts of Europe. At the same time, China developed its military capabilities to the extent that it is now second only to the US in military spending and has more naval ships than any other military in the world.

The rivalry between the US and China is playing out in which superpower dominates in resource-rich countries and regions of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. At stake is control over a whole host of economic resources and markets, especially critical mineral resources in Africa and South America, the Taiwanese advanced chip factories, and oil production.

Secure energy supply chains are a live-or-die imperative for any capitalist superpower, and it is in US imperialism's interest to have more direct control over the flow of oil to the Indo-Pacific, particularly to China, as well as to eliminate the Iranian threat to Israeli influence in the region. The US attack on Venezuela similarly cut off oil exports to China and established US control over the largest proven oil reserve in the world. US imperialism wants to firmly establish dominance over the Middle East—in terms of ensuring security for its most important ally, Israel, controlling energy supply chains, and securing a series of regional investments—before turning to potential military engagement directly with China.

War Produced A New Energy Crisis

The fuel crisis means big increases at the pump for US consumers, which millions of working-class and poor Americans can ill afford. Economic mayhem now wracks many Asian countries that import most of their oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Gulf state producers, but are too poor to have any significant stockpiles. To conserve fuel, Sri Lanka declared every Wednesday a public holiday, and in Pakistan foreign airliners are required to bring enough fuel for their return trips. Gulf states are big exporters of both fertilizer and the inputs used to make it. Prices of fertilizer are already up 30% in some places. Without a new source of fertilizer coming onto the world market, food shortages in parts of the world will be likely.


The graves of over 100 Iranian children killed when their school was hit by a US Tomahawk missile on February 28.

The LNG crisis was intensified when an Iranian missile hit Qatar's massive Ras Laffan facility in retaliation for Israel's bombing of Iran's South Pars gas field, paralyzing 17% of Qatar's LNG output for up to five years while the damage is repaired. This is a non-trivial proportion of the world market, and will mean shortages for people who need LNG for heating, cooking, and electricity generation. There are clear energy haves and have-nots, as richer countries have oil reserves and financial resources that poor countries don't. In every country, the crisis will fall hardest on the poor and working class.

The question at this stage is not so much about Trump chickening out, but about how the US can reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Without any doubt, the US and Israeli attacks are having a punishing impact on Iranian military capacity. However, at the time of writing, it remains to be seen if the US can reopen the Strait of Hormuz on a purely military basis without putting boots on the ground. With their stranglehold over an important amount of the world's gas and oil supply, the regime in Iran has strong leverage for negotiations.

The US options for reopening the Strait militarily—from invading Kharg Island, Iran's oil export hub, to the Navy escorting ships through the Strait—are fraught with danger. If, even in its weakened state, Iranian forces managed to hit a US naval ship, killing dozens or hundreds, retaliation by the US would be unavoidable. The more Trump tries to get control of the situation, the more likely further escalation becomes.

Putting soldiers on the ground in Iran would be a political risk for Trump of enormous proportions. Already, Trump's right-wing coalition is beginning to splinter. Entering a ground war, and potentially a "forever" war, after Trump campaigned against the disastrous US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, would supercharge the splintering process. There's a developing far-right ecosystem that is against foreign wars and is dangerously antisemitic, increasingly expressing opposition to Trump himself.

Needless to say, many millions of left-wing and liberal Americans are entirely opposed to military adventurism in Iran, but their opposition is not organized. The Democratic Party, also an imperialist party, is not a real opposition to war and has proven completely toothless to stop Trump. The question for socialists, as we will get into later, is how a mass, anti-capitalist anti-war movement can develop outside of the pro-capitalist Democratic party and utilize working-class methods of struggle to bring down the Trump regime.

Trump knows he needs to get out of the war, but there is no clear path to an exit.

Unintended Consequences

The rivalry between the US and China is not one that drives the two imperialist powers to ever greater levels of development, but rather one between two depleted heavyweights who weaken one another further as the fight wears on. The US operation in Venezuela was a humiliation for China, as it was unable to play any part in supporting its ally in Maduro. The Trump regime expected a repeat of its Venezuela success in Iran, blinded by hubris from making a more realistic assessment of the staying power of the Ayatollahs. Instead of scoring a triumphant victory over another key oil-producing ally of China, the US has gifted the Chinese regime time to strengthen its military. Meanwhile, US imperialism is most likely to be weakened by a combination of failure to win decisively and the growing tensions and dissatisfaction at home.

A few weeks of war have already resulted in perverse consequences for US imperialism's goal to gain more control over world energy supplies. The Trump regime has had to lift its own sanctions on Iranian and Russian oil to try and get more oil onto the world market. Russia is estimated to have earned nearly $1 billion more in the first two weeks of the Iran war than they normally would have.

Warfare is in the process of a transformation. First the war in Ukraine and now Iran are showing that cheaply produced drones in large quantities can be effective against much more expensive, sophisticated weaponry that takes much longer to produce. The US and Israel are already running low on munitions as the war has turned out to be considerably longer than expected. The US military has had to remove weapons from installations in South Korea and Japan, weakening the "pivot to Asia," a years-long priority for US imperialism.

For Mass Movements To End The War

The Iranian regime is a murderous capitalist dictatorship that socialists should utterly oppose. Ironically, the war on Iran has actually helped to shore up the Iranian regime's power, at least in the short term. The Iranian regime was at an extremely weak point prior to the war. It was forced to resort to horrifically brutal repression to put down the mass movement that erupted in response to food inflation in January, killing as many as 30,000 protesters. Far from sparking a popular revolt as Trump hoped for, the war has been the key factor in the regime getting a new lease on life. Anti-regime protests that were beginning to develop in Iranian universities in late February were completely cut across by the US and Israeli bombardment.

For years, the Iranian working class has come out in heroic struggle against the regime. The January protests erupted in more than 120 cities and in every province of the country with protesters chanting "Death to the dictator." In 2022, the mass "Women, Life, Freedom" uprising exploded after a young Kurdish woman was killed while in the custody of the so-called "morality police" after being arrested allegedly for not wearing a head scarf correctly. This movement expressed the outrage at the oppression meted out to women in Iran by the fundamentalist religious gender-separatist regime. It is the right and responsibility of the Iranian masses to bring down the rule of the Ayatollahs.

The working class worldwide, especially in the US and Israel, have the responsibility to help organize anti-war movements to oppose their own murderous imperialist regimes that are waging war on Iran and Lebanon. Despite their differences in religion, culture, and language, working-class people internationally, including in Israel and the US, have much more in common with one another than they do with the bloodthirsty capitalist ruling classes of their respective countries. US workers have absolutely nothing to gain from the war in Iran. Economically, we are being ravaged by skyrocketing fuel prices and a likely recession, not to mention the potential for American soldiers to be sent to fight and die in Iran.

Bring Down Trump, War & Capitalism

The war is massively unpopular and Trump's poll numbers are close to his lowest ever. In part because of the mass movement against ICE that reached its high point in Minneapolis, Trump is at his weakest point to date. The raw material exists for a mass movement to end the war in Iran, bring down Trump, and challenge the capitalist system and the billionaire class. We can use coordinated days of action like the No Kings protests to help mobilize millions to actively join the struggle against war. But we need to go much further.

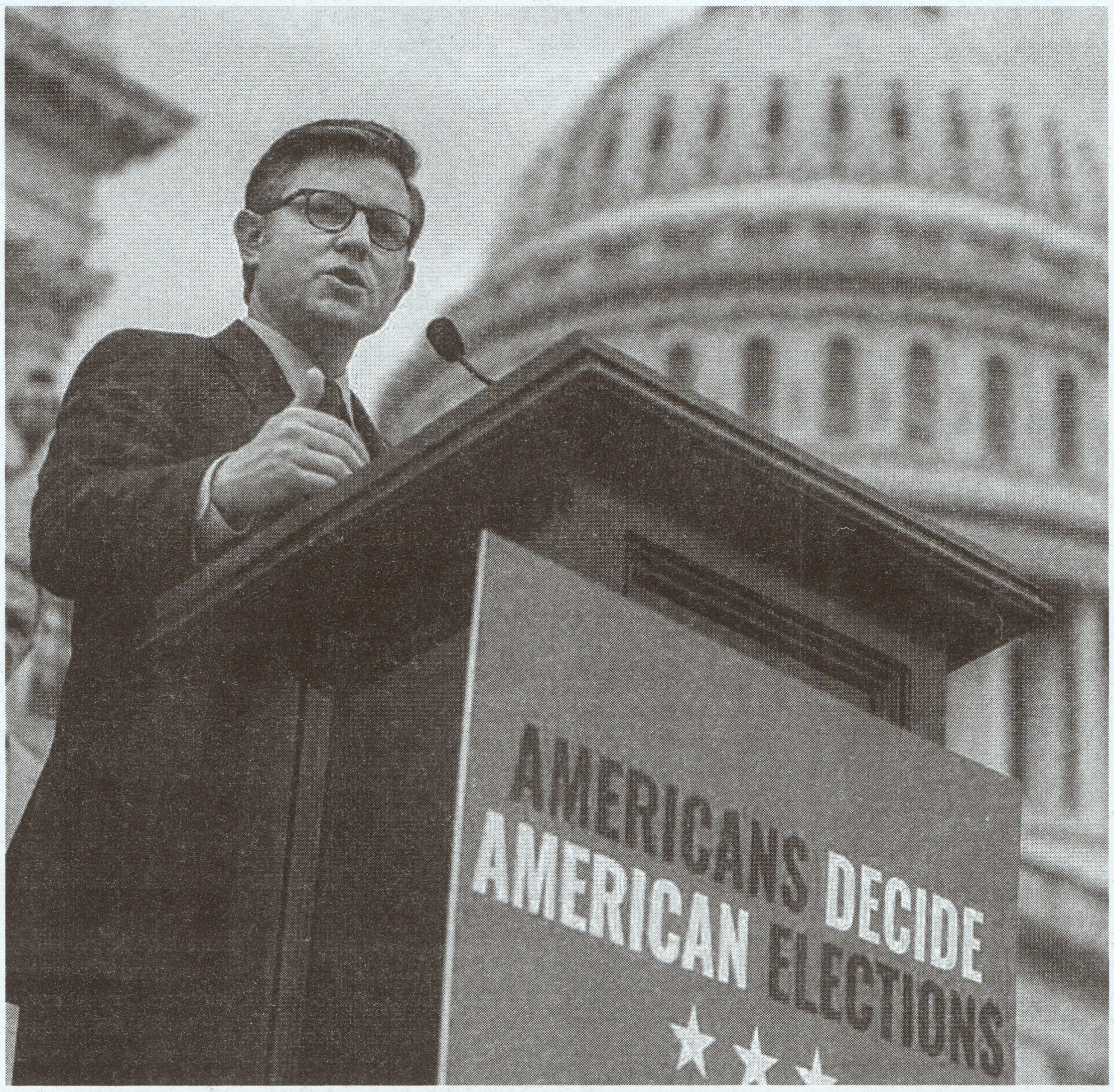
A sustained mass movement needs a democratically elected leadership to organize the movement in communities, workplaces, and schools. If union leaders refuse to step up and lead an internationalist fight against imperialist war, workers should fight to replace them with new leaders who will. The Democratic Party in Congress has proven itself irrelevant as a way to fight back against this war. Working people need a new political party that will stand against imperialist wars and for international solidarity of working-class people.

The general strikes in Italy, against the genocide in Gaza, and in Minneapolis, against ICE brutality, point the way forward for a mass anti-war movement. A nationwide general strike that brings major sectors of the economy like aviation, shipping, logistics, manufacturing, and more to a halt would constitute an enormous crisis for the Trump regime and point the way toward workers taking control over the economy.

The Middle East will never be at peace so long as capitalism is the dominant world system because of the immense potential value to capitalism of the fossil fuel resources in the region, as well as the inherent rivalry of expanding regional forces. Only on the basis of a socialist federation of Middle Eastern states, with the economy under the democratic control of workers, can the masses of the region achieve peace and prosperity. Ultimately, only a global transformation along socialist lines can put an end to all wars. ✪

THE MIDTERMS LOOM OVER TRUMP

TOM CREAN, NYC



If the midterm Congressional elections were held today, the Republicans would be headed to a huge defeat, losing control of the House of Representatives and perhaps the Senate as well. This is true even with the degree of gerrymandering that has already been engineered in a number of Republican-run states. One indication is that Democrats have flipped 28 state legislature seats from Republican control since Trump took office last January. The GOP majority in the House is also razor thin.

Why is this the case? Trump and the Republicans are presiding over a weak economy that is getting worse, an ICE terror campaign that has led to mass resistance, and a very unpopular war with Iran. The election will inevitably be a referendum on Trump himself who has personally presided over all these disasters. Given that rarely has an American political party been so dominated by a sitting president, the Congressional GOP will have nowhere to hide.

Democrats Have The Advantage

Extensive polling shows how much trouble the Republicans are in. Trump's overall job approval is at 38% and his disapproval is at 59% according to a mid-March Yahoo/YouGov poll. CBS reports that 60% are against the war with Iran. It is completely unprecedented for a major American military operation to be this unpopular right from the start.

In the same Yahoo/YouGov poll, Trump's net approval on the economy stood at minus 29%. This is a worse number than during the economic crash at the start of the pandemic in Trump's first term. When pollsters hone in on the cost of living, the picture gets even worse for Trump. Disapproval of Trump on this question stood at 67% compared to just 26% who approved. This is an astonishing 44-point drop from October 2024 when the Democrats' gaslighting of the public on the economy—claiming people just didn't realize how good things were—contributed directly to their defeat.

If the war continues and the price of gas stays high, and if food prices rise because of a sharp rise in fertilizer and transport costs, these poll numbers will get worse. They will definitely get worse if the US goes into recession this year, as seems very possible.

Nor does the deep unpopularity of the Democratic Party and its leadership among its own base change this picture. For all their disgust with Chuck Schumer, the hatred of Trump and his minions among Democrats and large numbers of independents has little precedent in modern times. They will turn out in massive numbers at the polls in November. But this outcome presumes a somewhat "fair election." This, however, is absolutely not guaranteed.

Republican Drive To Steal The Midterms

The Republican gerrymandering efforts will clearly not be enough for them to maintain control of Congress, especially the House. This is why Trump is pushing so hard for the so-called SAVE Act, which has passed the House and at the time of writing is stalled in the Senate. This act would require all voters to produce proof of citizenship in person in order to register to vote.

It would disenfranchise millions of people, especially poorer and older Americans without passports or easy access to birth certificates. Married women and trans people who have changed their names will also face a major hurdle to voting. All of this also will constitute an unconstitutional poll tax for those who have to pay for costly documents to prove their citizenship.

As the commentator Jamelle Bouie and others have pointed out, all of this is a direct echo of Jim Crow's systematic disenfranchisement of Black (and many white) voters: "For a literacy test, a Jim Crow registrar might ask a white would-be voter to recite the ABCs. She might ask a Black would-be voter, by contrast, to recite the Constitution from memory... This makes the SAVE Act, which would intentionally disenfranchise tens of millions of Americans, not just unconstitutional in its provisions but anti-constitutional in its fundamental contempt for popular sovereignty and rule by the governed." (NYT, March 18, 2026)

The bill, if brought into law, could have contradictory effects, given that many of Trump's own supporters could be disenfranchised, especially in rural areas, including by the virtual elimination of mail in ballots. But this is not the real point.

The SAVE Act, by "federalizing" elections which are, according to the Constitution, supposed to be under the control of the states, would bring them under Trump's direct control. Trump has already threatened to not accept the outcome of the election if they're not "honest." What is being shown is how far Trump is prepared to go to prevent losing. Trump's Justice Department has already sued over 20 states demanding they give over their voter rolls.

> ***If there is a blatant attempt to steal the elections or tamper with the results—a form of a coup—this could result in a major confrontation in society.***

As Socialist Alternative pointed out after the 2024 election, Trump 2.0 would pick up where Trump 1.0 left off when he systematically sought to overturn the outcome of the 2020 elections. This culminated in the storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021. The Trumpists failed then, but this time they are far better prepared. Trump's threat to use ICE to "monitor" the polls should be a clear warning.

We Must Prepare

But there is another important difference. In 2020, Socialist Alternative's call—beginning before the November vote—to mobilize against the attempt to steal the election was met with very little response in most places. People could see the danger, but hoped that Congress, the Justice Department, or the Supreme Court would stop it. And the ruling class at that point did oppose Trump's coup. Many believed that was the end of his political career, but that was before big sections of the ruling class decided that they agreed with his reactionary agenda more than they disagreed with it and got behind him in 2024.

Now the state apparatus has been purged of those disloyal to Trump. Ordinary working people have no faith that some part or branch of the government will stop this regime. This time a call for mass mobilization, which should come from the labor movement and the left, to defend the democratic rights of the working class and the oppressed, will receive a much different response.

If there is a blatant attempt to steal the elections or tamper with the results—a form of a coup—this could result in a major confrontation in society. In such a circumstance, coming out on the streets in our millions will likely not be enough. It will require mass working-class action on the scale of a nationwide general strike, a national version of what happened in Minneapolis on January 23 that played the key role in forcing Trump and ICE to retreat from the Twin Cities.

As in the fight against Trump generally, the Democrats at best will try to hold things back. They will absolutely oppose decisive action like shutting down airports, ports, schools, retail, manufacturing, and other parts of the economy to stop Trump's attempt to steal the election. We can place no faith in a party that, despite its differences with Trump, also serves the billionaires.

In reality it was the neoliberal policies promoted by the Democrats that reinforced mass inequality and helped pave the way for Trump. Under Bill Clinton they championed free trade deals that hurt American workers. Under Barack Obama, they bailed out the bankers, not working people, after the 2008 crash.

Again, the current situation shows why trying to reform this thoroughly corporate political party is hopeless. To decisively defeat the extremely dangerous threat represented by Trump's racist, warmongering far-right regime, working people need our own political party.

May 1, when a national coalition, including a number of unions, has endorsed the call for "No Work, No School, No Shopping," is a key stress test, a day to prepare for the decisive battles to come that can finally bring the authoritarian menace to an end. ✪

THE STAGGERING COSTS OF TRUMP'S WAR

Regular
5.49 9/10
Diesel
6.49 9/10
Food Mart
ATM

HANNAH FITZGERALD, PITTSBURGH

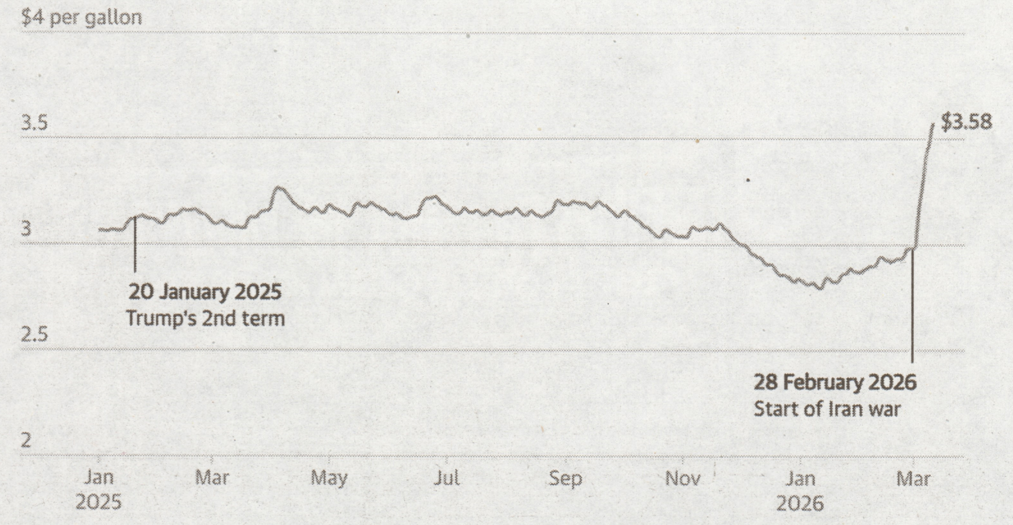
The costs of Trump and US imperialism's reckless gambles keep climbing, and it's about to get much, much worse. Everyone's already talking about how Trump and Netanyahu's war is pushing gas prices through the roof—around $4/gallon nationally, and well over $5/gallon on the West Coast. But that's only the beginning.

The bombing of oil and gas infrastructure in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted and delayed 20% of global oil shipments, pushing up prices. The war also means shipping corporations are avoiding the region altogether, including the Red Sea, instead taking longer, more dangerous routes that further eat up the already-limited supply of fuel. This means shipping almost everything will take longer and get vastly more expensive. Higher oil prices also means more expensive jet fuel, making it more expensive to ship goods by air.

It doesn't stop there—petrochemicals, derived from petroleum and natural gas, are fundamental components for manufacturing essential medicines, from antibiotics to cough syrup to basic ointments. Lifesaving medicines are about to become even further out of reach for poor and working people around the world. The basic building blocks of fertilizers also come from the oil refining process, with fertilizer prices up 30% since Trump and Netanyahu launched this war. Grocery prices, already 26% higher than they were five years ago, are about to spike even higher. Need a new smartphone or laptop? Helium gas is needed to produce computer chips, and the world's largest helium production facility, in Qatar, was hammered by Iranian missiles. If that wasn't enough, analysts report that oil prices reaching $140/barrel and remaining there even for a few months could be the tipping point for a recession, as lower and middle-income Americans would be left with less cash to spend.

Apparently, though, we have nothing to worry about, since Trump explained that the affordability crisis is just a "hoax." What a relief!

Price of gas in the US has spiked by 20% since the first US-Israeli strikes on Iran



Guardian graphic. Source: AAA. Notes: Average price for unleaded gasoline

> ***Everyone's already talking about how Trump and Netanyahu's war is pushing gas prices through the roof. But that's only the beginning.***

Who Actually Pays?

In his State of the Union address this year, Trump pitched a world where other countries pay for the so-called prosperity of the US. The reality is, for the actually unbelievable price tag of nearly $1 billion a day, it's the tax money of US workers that has been used to slaughter more than 1,400 Iranian civilians and now hundreds more in Lebanon as Israel expands the war further.

Weapons manufacturers and now AI corporations like Lockheed, Raytheon (now RTX), OpenAI, and Palantir are raking in billions on US workers' dime. These government contractors often take advantage of the immense pool of public funds to hike their prices for federal and local governments: $3.5 million for a Tomahawk missile to kill over 100 Iranian children? Working-class people in this country sure as hell didn't sign off on that. In just the first week of war, the Pentagon fired more than 319 of these missiles, and is now clamoring to resupply.

These billions of dollars that could be used to house the unhoused, feed the hungry, rebuild crumbling infrastructure, and fund universal healthcare—not just in the US but around the world—are used instead to produce bombs dropped on Iranian schools and hospitals. Those are the real priorities of US imperialism. Poor and working-class people around the world, most of all in Iran, are paying the real price for this war so that Trump's billionaire buddies can line their pockets.

The US and Israeli capitalist classes' interests lie in the global domination of US capital, especially over China's allies—this is their war, not ours. These billionaires' profits have soared to nauseating heights in recent years, and Trump's Big "Billionaire" Bill delivered even more tax cuts for the rich while slashing subsidies that helped working-class families afford health insurance. Meanwhile, there is *not a single state* in the US where a full-time worker earning the minimum wage can afford a two-bedroom home at market rent.

The Real State Of The Union

Higher gas prices are a devastating blow to the millions of workers who are highly dependent on cars for transportation in the US, a country built with the interests of oil and gas billionaires at heart, where efficient and widespread public transit is sorely lacking. Trump's policies have further exacerbated the issue by yanking a whole series of green tax credits for electric vehicles.

The price of beef is up 15% from a year ago, coffee prices are up 20%, and in just the last month we're seeing a nearly 50% spike in vegetables. It's no surprise that these price hikes are outpacing the rise in wages. The billion-dollar meatpacking industry, for example, is raking in huge profits from beef prices that are up 63% since 2020, but the average worker at a meatpacking facility makes less than $17/hour on average. UFCW #7 workers in Colorado are on strike, shutting down one of the largest meatpacking plants in the country. This spring and summer, many other contract battles are set to take place for unions across several industries, and it will be essential to link these with the mass political strike action called for on May 1, to shut down Trump's entire anti-worker agenda.

Clearly, the cost-of-living crisis is anything but a hoax. While prices for the basic consumables rise, so does housing: four in ten Americans report having been displaced from their homes in the past two years, and two in three young people believe they'll never be able to live where they want, being forced to stay at low-paying jobs. Trump is insistent gas prices will be lower than ever when he's done in Iran, but this is fantasy: the bombed-out oil plants in the Gulf will take years to rebuild, and in no plausible ceasefire scenario is there a stable Middle East that can fully calm the markets.

Mass Struggle For Affordability

While Trump's policies and his barbaric war have exacerbated the crisis that working people face to merely stay alive, it by no means started with his regime. During Biden's term, the Democrats too feigned ignorance to the cost-of-living crisis that had been mounting for years: it is not a symptom of Trump, but of capitalism. The Democrats campaign on affordability nearly every election cycle, but they have never actually done anything about it. That's because the Democrats are a party directly funded by the same real estate developers and pro-war pacts that helped Trump rise to power—they don't have any answers for capitalism's deepening crises.

The working class in Minneapolis on January 23 showed the way forward: we need a mass political strike against Trump's war on working people at home and abroad. We cannot rely on the Democrats, who provide only words and ineffectual legal challenges. We need to build an international anti-war movement that opposes all forms of imperialism. The fight against ICE, against the cost-of-living crisis, and against the war need to combine to fight for an end to these things, but also go on the offensive to win free healthcare, social housing, taxing the rich, and ultimately, a socialist world. ✪

CAPITALISM IS LITERALLY KILLING US *WE NEED SOCIALISM*

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE
Struggle • Solidarity • Socialism
SUPPORT PHILLY WORKERS
TAX THE RICH
SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE
FUND OUR
SUPPORT PHILLY
CAPITALISM IS KILLING US
FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE!
SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE
socialistalternative.org

ROSE HUDSON, MINNEAPOLIS

Wars, genocide, natural disasters. Unemployment, the rising costs of basic necessities like food and healthcare, sexism and racism. These are the hallmarks of the global economic system of capitalism in which working-class and poor people struggle—battling inequality, oppression, and scarcity.

While megacorporations like Amazon work people to death and imperialist adventures in the Gulf are quickly descending into an out-of-control conflict, billionaires take celebrities to the moon and visit the Titanic.

The capitalist system threatens humanity across the planet. Because of its size and, most crucially, its relationship to production, the working class is best positioned to dismantle the horrors of our current system—and fundamentally the only force capable of building a new system based in socialist principles of equality and democratic planning.

Why Fight For Socialism?

The system we live under is not inevitable. Capitalism's social structures and hierarchies are not rooted in human nature, despite what its ideological defenders hammer into us from birth.

Capitalism is a social and economic system which maximizes profit and wealth for the smallest section of society, which Marxists call the ruling class. Everyone who needs to work to meet their needs is part of the working class. Billionaires at the top consolidate their power through their corporate structures, courts, and legal systems, at the expense of the billions of us that actually produce and run everything.

Clearly, with billions of people on the planet, we can't all succeed and rise to the top. Therefore capitalism must stoke racism, sexism, and bigotry within the working class to ensure the majority doesn't organize to take mass action against receiving only the crumbs from what we create, against imperialist war and the destruction of our planet. Divide and rule is a key hurdle we must overcome to build a new, socialist world.

Under socialism, we can collectively and democratically plan what our neighborhoods and workplaces look like. Democracy would be radically different; bosses would be replaced by workers' councils that can meet to decide how to run our workplaces in the interest of providing service to our communities, not profits to shareholders. We can decide where we want clinics, grocery stores, coffee shops, and restaurants as opposed to food deserts or four Starbucks at the same intersection. By structuring society on the basis of meeting everyone's needs, capitalist exploitation and oppression would melt away.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 is the closest example of what the working class can gain from a revolution that immediately aims to build a planned economy and genuine workers' democracy. Against massive odds, the working class in Russia defeated a Tsar, and through the workers' councils (known as soviets), overthrew landlordism, immediately eliminated sexist and homophobic laws, and began the economic planning needed to raise the living standards of millions.

But to defend their democratic workers' state and all of these gains, socialist revolution needed to spread and win internationally. While the Russian Revolution inspired mass uprisings in its aftermath, tragically, no other revolution ended in victory. The Soviet Union became isolated in a capitalist world and degenerated as it struggled to survive.

Reform Or Revolution

In today's reactionary world, there's great pressure to fight for only the smallest gains we can get. However, the Trump administration's cuts to the EPA, its attacks on civil rights, the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and other actions all show that past reforms we've won to improve our lives can be rolled back when the capitalist class decides they're too much of an obstacle to their interests.

How should we fight this? By building mass social movements, strengthening our labor unions, fighting for our own political representation independent of the ruling-class parties, and taking to the streets to challenge every injustice. But we have to go further.

So long as we live under capitalism, a system that wasn't built for us and isn't run by us, we in the working class can't simply legislate our way to a more just world, reform, or build a parallel structure to the system today. These efforts do not resolve the conflict between the ruling and working classes.

Some people believe that eventually there will be a final crisis of capitalism that results in its inevitable collapse. Families are being ripped apart by ICE in the US, millions have been murdered and displaced in Gaza—what does the worst of all worlds look like? These crises will continue indefinitely unless we fight for a revolution that can overthrow the whole system.

A Socialist World Is Possible

Our current era has features of revolution and counterrevolution. In Iran, mass movements shook the Khamenei regime before the US and Israel began their bombing campaign. The history of mass struggle shows that working people have the power to change society through building a multi-racial, multi-gender movement. These movements need an accountable, organized, working-class leadership prepared to withstand all pressures the ruling class brings to bear.

Revolutionary socialists fight to be wherever struggle develops, to push it forward and sharpen the demands of our movements, and to fight for a socialist world. This means fighting for the power to decide how we are organized, to meet our own needs, on the basis of equality and universal self-determination. ✪

FROM SCHOOL TO THE STREETS—WALK OUT FOR TRANS RIGHTS!

LEAH STEVENS, CINCINNATI

Trans people have faced a relentless barrage of attacks since Trump declared his war on "gender extremism" and "woke ideology." Alongside immigrants, trans people have been a key target of Trump's administration as the reassertion of the nuclear family and the infiltration of Christian nationalism reaches a fever pitch. The denial of the right to exist is the horrifying reality being posed to both trans youth and adults.

In just the last two months, the Idaho House passed a bathroom bill which can throw trans people in prison for up to five years, Kansas has revoked the driver's licenses of 1700 trans people, and the Supreme Court has ordered California public schools to report to parents when their child is transitioning. This paints only a partial picture of sports bans, gender-affirming care bans, and ID bans that have rained down in the last year.

A glimmer of hope can be found in Colorado, where Jeffco Public Schools (JPS), the second-largest school district in the state, has recently declared they will not comply with the order from Trump's Department of Education to instate bathroom and sports bans for trans students. This is very much a targeted attack—JPS has a history of LGBTQ inclusion and in 2019 was the first district in Colorado to pass anti-discrimination policy to protect LGBTQ students. Public schools, which represent key ideological battlegrounds for the Trump administration, have an important role to play in protecting trans youth.

However, these districts rely on the law to justify their defiance, which is simply not enough against a vicious enemy like Trump, who won't let the law get in the way of revoking federal funding, or worse. Under this immense pressure, school administrations can cave. Only mass action and defiance, that makes clear business cannot run as usual when trans people are under attack, can force back the right wing. Last year at the University of Cincinnati, over 500 students and faculty packed a Board of Trustees meeting to force them to remove the newly unveiled "biological women" and "biological men" bathroom signs.

The sickouts of teachers and mass walkouts of students across the country against ICE raids are an inspiring example of what is possible. These walkouts urgently need to connect the attacks on immigrants to the attacks on trans people, and coordinate with teachers and staff to take strike action in solidarity. This May Day, declared by some national labor leaders to be a day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping," needs to be a flash point for shutting down business as usual and building our movement against Trump, ICE, war, and all oppression. ✪

A MANUFACTURED CRISIS: US IMPERIALISM'S WAR ON CUBA

TONY GONG, BOSTON

OFF
STOP the blockade against CUBA
STOP the blockade against CUBA
TRUMP, RUBIO: HANDS OFF CUBA

US imperialism has launched the harshest offensive against Cuba since the Cold War, blocking all fuel shipments to the island to forcibly starve it into regime change. Out of ten million Cubans, five million live with chronic illness, one in four are over the age of 60, and one million get their water from electric well pumps. They have been the hardest hit by electricity blackouts, which happened frequently even before the fuel blockade, but have now become near-total.

The power grid completely failed several times in March. Soon, there will be no fuel to move food from the countryside into the cities, causing mass hunger and migration. This is the humanitarian collapse that US imperialism hopes to engineer so Trump can personally "[have] the honor of taking Cuba." Socialists oppose all imperialist attacks and defend the social gains of the Cuban Revolution against both the US and the Cuban Communist Party's attempts to "liberalize" the economy and restore capitalism.

Why The US Targets Cuba

Before the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the country was ruled by the brutal, pro-US dictator Fulgencio Batista. Under Batista, US corporations owned much of Cuba's economy including 70% of its arable land. Batista banned most democratic rights, including the right to strike, while turning Havana into a playground of casinos, drugs, and prostitution for American elites.

Batista was overthrown in 1959 by Cuban revolutionaries, and in 1961, Fidel Castro nationalized US assets, abolished capitalism, and transformed Cuba's economy into a planned economy controlled by an unelected bureaucracy, modeled after the Soviet Union. Because Cuba is not democratic and run by a bureaucracy, and is not part of a broader international democratically planned economy, it never reached a socialist level of production. However, it does have a nationally planned economy where the main enterprises are state-owned. This means Cuba is still not a capitalist society, and along with Castro's ousting of US corporations, is the reason why the US keeps on embargoing Cuba.

Trump wants to deal a fatal blow against a historic rival. A capitalist Cuba would solidify US control of Latin America. Trump's overthrow of Venezuelan leader Maduro and his pressure on Mexico has cut off Cuba's two lifelines of oil. He announced that defeating Cuba is "next" after Iran.

How Did Cuba's Economy Get This Bad?

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 cut off Cuba's source of fuel and chemicals, and plunged the island into a decade of extreme poverty called the "Special Period," which ended around 2000, after leftist Hugo Chavez came to power in Venezuela and extended a lifeline of oil exports.

The Cuban bureaucracy has since shifted the economy away from sugar exports and towards tourism. But in 2020, the pandemic practically halted tourism. At the same time, the Communist Party passed market-friendly reforms to the Cuban constitution and currency. These reforms unleashed market forces that caused regular blackouts and rising inflation, which turned off tourists and prevented a recovery. Today, existing hotels only have 25% occupancy, but Cuba's government continued building new luxury hotels and opened a 40-story skyscraper in 2025.

Cuba didn't have to be dependent on tourism and fuel imports. For example, with Chinese help, the Cuban government grew solar from 6% to 20% of total energy generation over the last year, building 49 solar parks. Each solar park costs only $16 million, and 160 parks could meet Cuba's daytime power needs of 3.2 GW for just $2.6 billion.

Compare that cost to the $5 billion spent by the Cuban government to build luxury hotels. Moreover, the bureaucracy allocated agricultural investment to be 11 times lower than tourism investment in a country with food scarcity! These examples illustrate the need for genuine democracy in Cuba with a planned economy, which holds economic planners accountable and is the lifeblood of a socialist economy—one that neither puts Cuba in debt to capitalist China, nor relies on the greedy capitalists within Cuba. A democratically run economy would prioritize energy and food over hotels.

Can Capitalism Save Cuba?

The US ruling class has always blamed Cuba's problems on a centrally planned economy, when in reality it has delivered historic gains for ordinary Cubans and others in Latin America. The real reason the US attacks the planned economy is because it has been an inspiring alternative to capitalism for millions of workers around the world.

However in 2019, the Communist Party rewrote the constitution to allow private ownership of businesses (employing 100 workers or fewer) and foreign ownership of property. There are now about 10,000 new small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), with the choicest businesses run by former army officers or family members of bureaucrats who profit from their state connections.

Unlike centrally planned state enterprises, private entrepreneurs set prices to maximize profit. This has sent Cuban inflation skyrocketing from 1.3% in the two decades up to 2019, to 18.5% in 2020, to 77% in 2021, and has remained high ever since. In 2024, the government tried to cap the prices of chicken and other staple foods, but were forced to withdraw their plans after strong pushback from the new businessmen class—many of whom are former army or state officials.

It's clear that the process of capitalist restoration has damaged Cuba's economy and worsened the effects of the recent blockade. Significant protests are now happening in Cuba. However, it's important to not have illusions that US imperialism will bring relief to ordinary Cubans. The US would replace the forced poverty of embargo with the old tyranny of big business exploitation. A capitalist Cuba would be stripped of its planned economy, free healthcare, free education, and other social benefits.

The only way forward for Cuba is a political transformation that replaces the bureaucracy with an economy democratically planned by the masses of working people, alongside a socialist struggle across the Americas to replace the misery of capitalism with workers' democracy. Only this way can the embargo be lifted on terms that benefit ordinary people, and the island's wealth be channeled toward building renewable and reliable energy, improving agricultural investments, and a better future for all Cubans. ✪

JOIN SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

Socialist Alternative is in political solidarity with revolutionary socialists all around the world fighting in our workplaces, communities, and schools against the exploitation and injustices people face every day under the global capitalist system.

We don't just talk—we organize and fight to change the world. We build protests and walkouts. We organize unions and strikes. We fight for the program contained in our newspaper Socialist Alternative, written by our own members.

We led struggles in Seattle that won the country's first $15/hr minimum wage, landmark renters' rights and a tax on Amazon to fund affordable social housing. Now our members are helping to lead fights of USPS letter carriers to win a $30/hr starting wage and the right to strike.

Every week, we have branch meetings in cities across the country where we analyze events from a Marxist perspective and discuss our work. Trump, poverty, discrimination, war and environmental destruction are symptoms—capitalism is the disease. Join Socialist Alternative today!

Socialist Alternative is part of International Socialist Alternative (ISA). Learn more about ISA at www.internationalsocialist.net

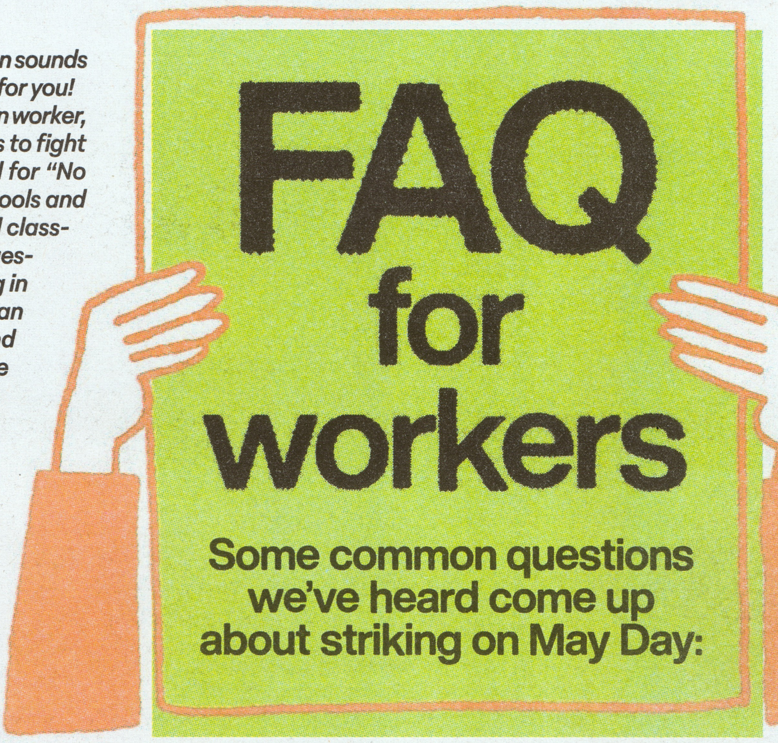
Reach out to us at info@socialistalternative.org!

STRIKING on May Day

Near the end of January 2026, Google searches for "general strike" skyrocketed. This of course was on the heels of the movement in Minneapolis inspiring workers and young people by striking against ICE on January 23. Now, a section of labor leaders are calling for a nationwide day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping," on May 1 against Trump, ICE, and imperialist war. This would be a massive step forward in the anti-Trump movement.

Political strike action is back on the table, and not a moment too soon. It's time we go beyond mass protest and take coordinated action that hits Trump and his billionaire buddies where it hurts: their profits. Chances are, if you've been to an anti-Trump protest in recent months, you've heard a labor leader or activist mention strike action. You may have even had the thought, "Strike action sounds good, but where do I start?" If so, this FAQ is for you!

Whether you are a union worker, non-union worker, or even a student, every one of us who wants to fight Trump has a responsibility to bring the call for "No Work, No School, No Shopping" into our schools and workplaces. For most of our coworkers and classmates, there will be hesitations, fears, and questions around taking strike action. Organizing in your school or workplace for the first time can be daunting. Being equipped with clear and confident answers can help break down these barriers and prepare for collective action. ✪



FAQ for workers

Some common questions we've heard come up about striking on May Day:

Q: How can I go on strike when I can't afford to miss work? Is striking realistic?

A: Going on strike is a sacrifice for ordinary people, but it's also one of our most powerful weapons. The question is: is a strike worth the sacrifice? Unions and workers need to ask: can I continue to treat my patients if ICE keeps raiding my hospital? Can I bring my child to school if deportations continue?

A strike that shuts down profits and business as usual is one of the most powerful ways workers can force change. Unions need to lead from the front by organizing workers to get strike-ready, using strike funds, and being willing to defy anti-strike clauses in contracts that help the bosses, not us. When we work together around common demands and strategy, we can guard against retaliation.

Q: Isn't it illegal to go on strike?

A: For many workers it is, but the bigger and more organized the strike, the harder it is for the government and bosses to go after workers. In 2018, West Virginia teachers led a week-long illegal wildcat strike that occupied the state capitol. They shut down schools in all 55 counties and forced the state to meet their demands without a single teacher facing legal repercussions.

The laws are there to hold back struggle, but as MLK Jr. said, "One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws." When Trump and the billionaires break the law, it's workers who pay the price like the eight people murdered by ICE just this year. We are not the same. Where fear is a real barrier, organizing a coordinated sick-out can help lower the stakes.

Q: Won't strikes or boycotts harm other workers, local small businesses, or public services?

A: It's no small thing to forgo pay and potentially risk your job to join a strike. But hardship is not created by the strike: it's created by the conditions that made the strike necessary in the first place. In Minneapolis, ICE caused $81 million in lost revenue for small businesses, $47 million in lost wages for people afraid to leave home, and a $25 million increase in rental and food assistance needs.

Strikes are about taking on the forces that crush and divide workers, hollow out small businesses, and defund critical public services. We have to ask ourselves: what is the cost of doing nothing? If we are going to see long-term gains, we must be willing to accept that short-term sacrifices may be required.

Q: What if my city isn't ready? We might take action in the event of a Minneapolis-style invasion, but probably not sooner.

A: Some labor leaders are raising that they'll only call for strikes when things get to the level of Minneapolis earlier this year. We absolutely cannot wait for this level of devastation to hit our city before taking action.

We've seen the speed and ferocity with which Trump and ICE are willing to crack down, and so we must prepare to get strike-ready now. Taking nationwide action on May 1, a historic day for the immigrant rights' struggle, is a step towards making sure ICE does not step one foot in our city and backs down where raids are already happening.

Ready to get started?
Check out these quick guides!

5 steps to organize a SICK-OUT at work

5 steps to organize a school WALKOUT